



News Release

National Guard Bureau Public Affairs Press
Desk (703) 601-6767
ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mesg.ngb-media-desk-owner@mail.mil
www.nationalguard.mil

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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National Guard Response to COVID-19

As of Sunday morning, more than 14,670 Air and Army National Guard professionals are supporting the COVID-19 crisis response at the direction of their governors. Twenty-two states and two territories have approved the use of Dual-Status Commanders, giving them the authority to command active and reserve component troops under control of a state's governor. As a governor's response to the coronavirus pandemic continues to evolve, so does the Guard response.

"We are using every tool available to get through this national crisis as fast as possible and get our great American economic juggernaut back to work," said Air Force Gen. Joseph Lengyel, chief of the National Guard Bureau. "COVID-19 is the most immediate threat facing our nation, and the virus knows no state boundaries. What the National Guard is doing in the states is part of a nationwide war on the coronavirus."

On March 27, Secretary of Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper modified and accelerated the process by which the Department of Defense authorizes the use of National Guard forces under Title 32 Section 502(f). The modification creates a conditional pre-authorization in response to Federal Emergency Management Agency requests that ensures quicker federal funding for state National Guard forces mobilizing to aid in whole-of-government COVID-19 response efforts.

"This authorization enables [governors] timely use of the National Guard to save lives and protect public health and safety," Esper said in a March 27 letter to each governor. "The men and women of the National Guard are Citizen-Soldiers who stand ready to serve their communities as we fight COVID-19."

National Guard support focuses on supporting a wide variety of mission sets ranging from community-based testing sites and creating enhanced medical capacity, to facilitating logistical support.

"Our Guard members are on the front lines of this pandemic, fighting an invisible and dangerous enemy," Lengyel said. "Every American has a role in stopping this pandemic. By following CDC guidelines, you are directly serving your neighbors and our nation."

Current National Guard COVID-19 response missions include, but are not limited to:

- Full-time 24-hour state Emergency Operations Center staffing to synchronize National Guard efforts with local and state mission partners to plan and execute an effective response;
- Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase medical capacity;
- Supporting warehouse operations and logistics efforts to help deliver critical supplies;
- Delivering food in hard-hit communities;
- Manning call centers to be a knowledgeable and calming voice;
- Performing sample collection and delivery to medical personnel;
- Providing support and symptoms screening to testing facilities;
- Providing transportation and assessment support to healthcare providers

The National Guard has long-standing partnerships with state emergency managers and first responders to help ensure a rapid and unified response.

If you were going to design an ideal military force to assist with a response like COVID-19, it would be the National Guard. We are 450,000 strong in every state, territory, nearly every zip code in the country. Less time and distance = more lives saved.

The National Guard Bureau (NGB) facilitates integration and synchronization of National Guard support to civil authorities and associated planning between states, the Department of Defense and federal partners. The National Guard's Coordination Center is a 24 / 7 operation working at increased capacity in anticipation of COVID-19 requirements and to ensure unified and rapid response efforts between its state and federal partners.

The National Guards of the 50 states, three territories and the District of Columbia have a very deep bench of nearly 450,000 experienced and proven Air and Army National Guard professionals. Guard units frequently train side-by-side with state and local emergency responders, making them well-suited for domestic operations.

National Guard members work and live in every community across the nation and have a proven track record of success supporting civilian authorities after homeland emergencies. The National Guard has unique capabilities such as its Civil Support Teams and CERFPs that could provide local first responders with additional resources to combat COVID-19.

For information about the use of National Guard forces under Title 32 Section 502(f), access the story at this link: <https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/2129577/secretary-esper-enhances-national-guards-rapid-covid-19-response/>.

For more information regarding this press release, please send an email to the National Guard Bureau Media Operations desk at ng.ncr.ngb-arng.mesg.ngb-media-desk-owner@mail.mil.

National Guard COVID-19 Response Efforts and State PAO Contact Information

Florida:

The Florida National Guard has 1,540 Florida National Guardsmen activated in support of COVID-19 providing operational support of Community Based Testing Sites; augmentation to airport screening measures; as well as statewide logistics support, coordination, planning and operational mission sets. To date, the FLNG has assisted in the testing of more than 11,900 individuals for the COVID-19 virus. An additional CBTS will be established in Palm Beach County and is projected to be operational March 31. The State of Florida's request for 502(f) funding has been approved.

Additionally, the FLNG continues to support the Florida Department of Health and airport authorities in application of the Governor's order to conduct screenings at airports in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Palm Beach International and Fort Myers. These missions will support the Governor's recent travel ban guidance in an attempt to significantly reduce the number of infected individuals entering the state from areas with a high amount of community spread. Department of Health continues to supply the required PPE enabling FLNG to conduct this support requirement.

The FLNG has activated our medical professionals, Army Combat Medical specialists and Air Force Medical technicians in support of the Florida Department of Health's Community Based Testing Sites. Our Guardsmen have reported in and formed Task Force Medical.

Guardsmen have been activated to augment the State Logistics Readiness Center, the state's logistics branch, as well as facilitate statewide logistics needs of the Florida National Guard formations on mission. The FLNG's support to the SLRC remains operational 24-hours-a-day. Logistics professionals continue to support the state's emergency operations centers, as well as sustaining the mobilized FLNG personnel.

The FLNG has also activated Guardsmen to specifically augment the State Emergency Operations Center and local emergency management offices across the state.

Please attribute to 1st Lt. Tahisha Coleman, Florida National Guard Public Affairs Officer. She can also be reached at 904-823-0166, or by email at tahisha.j.coleman.mil@mail.mil.

Iowa:

Iowa National Guard activates regional support group and continues COVID-19 response efforts with the activation of approximately 75 soldiers from the 734th Regional Support Group, based at Camp Dodge in Johnston, on March 27.

Additionally, soldiers assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment of the 734th Regional Support Group and its subordinate units, the 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, out of Camp Dodge, and the 1133rd Transportation Company, out of Mason City, will provide additional logistical and transportation assets to the fight against COVID-19.

The Iowa National Guard continues deliveries of vital medical personal protective equipment to more than 20 distribution sites. In conjunction with the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, soldiers delivered approximately 32 pallets to 23 county distribution centers, bringing the total distribution of 166 pallets to more than 75 counties across the state since distribution missions began March 24.

In addition, eight soldiers from the 186th Military Police Company, out of Camp Dodge, delivered and assembled two tents to the Central Iowa Veterans Administration Healthcare System in Des Moines Friday. These tents will be used to help screen those entering the hospital for COVID-19.

Currently there are now more than 120 Soldiers and Airmen on duty supporting a variety of COVID-19 response missions across the state.

Images from today are available on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS): <https://www.dvidshub.net/image/6153339/iowa-soldiers-set-up-operations-cell-iowa-city-support-covid-19-response-efforts>.

For photos and video from current missions, check out Iowa National Guard Facebook and Instagram stories @IowaNationalGuard. Follow Iowa National Guard on Twitter @IowaNatGuard for updates.

Please attribute to Col. Michael Wunn, Iowa National Guard Public Affairs Officer. He may be reached at 515-252-4582 (office), 515-971-6385 (cell), or by email at michael.a.wunn.mil@mail.mil.

New York:

The New York National Guard has 2,450 personnel on mission across the state. This includes members of the New York Army and Air National Guard, the New York Guard (State Defense Force), and the New York Naval Militia.

Members of the New York Army and Air National Guard are now operating under Title 32 orders. The federal government is paying their salaries while they continue to operate under the orders of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo. Members of the New York Guard and New York Naval Militia, which are state forces, remain on duty in State Active Duty status, being paid by the state.

Six Joint Task Forces are operating on Long Island, New York City, the Hudson Valley, Capital Region, Syracuse and Buffalo to support state and local governments.

In New York City, NYNG personnel continue to support the final preparations to receive patients at the Jacob Javits Center FEMA field hospital. A centralized nursing station was installed March 27, along with associated furniture. Pharmacy equipment and formulary arrived March 28. The facility currently has 1,000 beds and additional beds will be added.

About 600 U.S. Army medical personnel from the 9th and 531st Hospital Centers, part of the 44th Medical Brigade, are also available. The 531st is from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and the 9th from Fort Hood, Texas. These personnel will staff the augmented care facility.

Personnel will rehearse their roles at the facility today to prepare for accepting patients beginning on March 30.

A NYNG mayor's cell and other soldiers are supporting operations at the site.

The NYNG continues to support six drive-thru testing sites. Sites are located at SUNY Stonybrook, Jones Beach State Park, Staten Island, Glen Island State Park in Westchester County, the Anthony Wayne Service area in Rockland County, and Lehman College in the Bronx.

An additional site is being established at Coop City - Bay Plaza Mall in the Bronx and the NYNG will assist in staffing that location with soldiers and medical personnel. Personnel will be rehearsing operations today. That site is due to go live on March 30.

New York National Guard personnel are continuing to support food packaging and in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. Food distribution missions will begin in Albany County on March 30.

In Westchester County and New York City, the NYNG continues to support the cleaning of public facilities to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

New York soldiers and airmen are also conducting logistics missions in support of the state response, including warehousing support and bulk distribution at sites in the Hudson Valley, the Albany area, and the Mohawk Valley. Medical supplies are flowing into warehouses being staffed by NYNG personnel.

Hand sanitizer warehousing and deliveries will continue today across the lower Hudson Valley. Guard personnel anticipate dropping supplies at ten locations.

New York National Guard also continues to provide support to the New York State Coronavirus Hotline by working in a call center in Rotterdam, N.Y. to offering updated information to the public. Other soldiers support a call center mission in Brooklyn in New York City.

Soldiers are also on call to assist Department of Health officials at the Wadsworth Laboratory in Albany for packaging COVID 19 test kits.

New York National Guard images continue to go up on DVIDS:
<https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/NYNG>, and our NY National Guard Flickr site,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/nyng>.

Please attribute to Col. Richard Goldenberg, New York Army National Guard Public Affairs Officer. He can also be reached at 518-786-6150, or by email at richard.l.goldenberg.mil@mail.mil.

Virginia:

The Virginia National Guard has made Issue No. 6 of the 2020 Commonwealth's Guardian bi-weekly newsletter available for download in PDF format at <https://go.usa.gov/xvqpF>. For the latest news about the Virginia National Guard, please visit <http://vanguard.dodlive.mil> or <https://www.facebook.com/VaNationalGuard>.

In this issue of the 2020 Commonwealth's Guardian:

Virginia National Guard assists with planning, logistics in COVID-19 fight: The Virginia National Guard has approximately 100 personnel working directly to support Virginia's COVID-19 response as of March 25. VNG soldiers, airmen and members of the Virginia Defense Force are helping with medical and logistics planning as well as helping prepare supplies for delivery. Additional personnel are providing mission command and logistics support for the VNG itself. <https://go.usa.gov/xvqdH>

Adjutant General of Virginia COVID-19 Update: We know the current situation with COVID-19 is putting huge stresses on our uniformed personnel, civilian workforce and families. There are so many questions everyone is asking, and we are doing our very best to answer them and provide regular updates as often as we are able. <https://go.usa.gov/xvqd6>

More Virginia National Guard links to resources:

Virginia National Guard COVID-19 Resources – <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/covid-19/>

VNG COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions – <https://go.usa.gov/xvqv3>

Readiness and Resiliency Resources – <https://vanguard.dodlive.mil/readyandresilient/>

This information is provided behalf of the Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office. Additional questions can be addressed to ngva.pao@mail.mil or by calling 804-236-7892.

West Virginia:

West Virginia National Guard ramping up efforts to combat COVID-19 and encourages 'flattening the curve.'

“Our efforts over the last two weeks and going forward will have a pivotal impact on the spread of this virus and how our state is able to respond. We must continue to implement all the necessary precautions and follow the advice from the CDC, Dr. Marsh, Dr. Slemp and [Department of Health and Human Resources],” said Maj. Gen. James Hoyer, Adjutant General

of the West Virginia National Guard. “We cannot lose focus as we move forward in our efforts to combat this virus. Every action we take now will make a difference.”

Currently, nearly 300 members of the West Virginia National Guard are serving the State of West Virginia by augmenting civil authorities through four lines of effort:

- Operationalizing of the event
- Stabilization of the population
- Logistical movement of critical supplies
- Information and analytics to combat the virus

Our force continues to maintain support to the state’s coordinated response to this public health emergency. Over the last 24 hours, we have received shipment of critical personal protective equipment and are distributing it across the state today, which includes 278,000 gloves, 18,480 N95 masks and 12,400 gowns. Additionally, the WVNG provided logistical support for the delivery of 30 Powered Air Purifying Respirators to St. Mary’s Medical Center and 10 PAPRs to Monongalia County Health Department yesterday.

Our work with the Department of Education and the Mountaineer Food Bank continues as more than 1,220 30-day family of four meals were packaged yesterday with the assistance of WVNG Soldiers.

The WVNG continues to provide critical support for the state’s needs to include PPE distribution, training of PPE donning and doffing for hospitals and first responders, food bank assistance and data tracking and analysis with our epidemiology partners.

The WVNG has conducted the following missions since coming on duty to support the state in all aspects of COVID-19 preparation and response:

- 18 soldiers have been providing assistance with food box building and distribution at with the Mountaineer Food Bank and with the Greater Greenbrier County Long Term Recovery Committee.
- WVNG medical personnel are supporting the COVID-19 hotline in Charleston, answering calls and providing information to concerned citizens. Additional medical personnel are being assigned to provide planning expertise to state agencies in areas such as long-term care facilities, epidemiology and contact tracing support.
- 19 liaison officers from the WVNG are working hand-in-hand with the various West Virginia agencies who are leading the response to COVID-19 to include the Department of Health and Human Resources, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and Department of Education.
- The WVNG’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive Battalion, the 35th Civil Support Team, and the 35th Enhanced Response Force Package have provided classroom and hands-on personal protective equipment instruction to more than 120 first responders and hospital staff from Kentucky and West Virginia, in order to help prepare them on how to minimize cross-contamination through proper wear of, “donning” and “doffing” of PPE.

- Five soldiers provided capabilities for conducting COVID-19 swabs in Morgantown March 23 and 24 utilizing PAPRs PPE that can be decontaminated and reused, greatly reducing the use of disposable, one-time-use PPE.
- Soldiers continue to provide logistical support for delivery of PPE from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to hospitals and health departments.
- The WVNG is building a network of epidemiology analysts from to assist DHHR with COVID-19 tracking and analytics.
- Continue to provide logistical pickup and transfer of PAPRs and canisters to various health care networks in the event of a surge of patients.
- Our CBRN field continues to in order to facilitate the needs of the state for COVID-19 testing or training of health care providers and first responders.

All current and future missions performed by the WVNG are a part of a coordinated state-level public health preparation and response effort for the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, initiated by Governor Jim Justice, and being led by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

The West Virginia National Guard has a bench of nearly 6,400 experienced and proven Air and Army National Guard professionals who frequently train side-by-side with state and local emergency responders, making them well-suited for domestic operations.

Our National Guard members work and live in every community have a proven record of accomplishment supporting civilian authorities during and after homeland emergencies.

Please attribute to Maj. Holli Nelson, the West Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Officer. She may be reached at 304-561-6762 (office), 740-710-1745 (cell), or by email at holli.r.nelson.mil@mail.mil. Additional content, with high-resolution imagery can be accessed online at: www.dvidshub.net/units/wv-ang. Social media sites for WVNG can be accessed at: Facebook.com/WV.nationalguard, Twitter.com/WVNationalGuard, and Instagram.com/wv_nationalguard.

Wisconsin:

The Wisconsin National Guard continues to support state's COVID-19 response. Approximately 350 Citizen Soldiers and Airmen from the Wisconsin National Guard serving on state active duty continue to support the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since Gov. Tony Evers declared a public health emergency March 12, the Wisconsin National Guard has completed a number of missions to support the state and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services.

On March 25, Wisconsin National Guard troops transported a load of donated personal protective equipment to a warehouse facility for the state's use. Approximately 15 troops remain on hand to assist with PPE handling and warehousing operations.

A small team of Wisconsin National Guard planners and project managers is offering assistance to the Wisconsin Elections Commission to aid elections officials in planning for logistics considerations to help ensure the state can hold its upcoming election April 7. Among the considerations, the Guard may assist with procuring and distributing hand sanitizer, wipes, spray bottles and other needed supplies to polling sites to ensure the election can be held safely.

Many of the National Guard troops called to state active duty are medics or medical professionals, while many others are versed in decontamination processes. Guard personnel are actively training and preparing for a potential specimen collection mission that could be established at mobile testing sites around the state, should the state need that resource.

Please attribute to Capt. Joe Trovato, of the Wisconsin National Guard Public Affairs Office. The WING PAO may be reached at 608-242-3048, or by email at ngwi.pao@mail.mil. Additional content, with high-resolution imagery can be accessed online at: <http://dma.wi.gov/DMA/news/2020news/20040>.